



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Gulf Islands National Seashore  
1801 Gulf Breeze Parkway  
Gulf Breeze, FL. 32561

## Fort Pickens Road Flooding

### General Information

Santa Rosa Island is a dynamic barrier beach island that changes naturally over time. When sections of the Fort Pickens Road were reconstructed in 2009, it was designed to accommodate vehicle access to the park with minimal disruption to wildlife habitat and natural processes that make this island special. Thus, the elevation of the road is very low and, therefore, subject to periodic flooding. This may occur at least several times a year, especially from storm surge, or when above average high tides, coupled with strong southerly winds, push water onto the road. Flood events will range from minor instances around the time of high tide—where visitors would be forced to drive through some shallow salt water to get to or from Fort Pickens—to significant over-washes, where the volume of water and sand deposited on the road may cause impassable driving conditions for two-wheel-drive vehicles for days until the water recedes, park crews inspect for road damage, and clear the road.

We do our best to predict and communicate in advance when flood events may occur. We do this by posting a current forecast of the probability of an over-wash event occurring, in terms ranging from “Low Risk,” to “High Risk.” As we are forecasting the weather and its potential causes, our predictions may be wrong from time to time. Our forecasts are not based on scientific data or computer models. They merely represent the opinion of a senior staff member based on his or her past observations. We offer them to help you make informed decisions and to exercise your discretion.

If we *anticipate* that a flood event will *likely* result in a lengthy closure of the road, we may evacuate the campground, cancel reservations, and close the Fort Pickens Unit altogether. This may be done on very short notice. Less severe flood events may cause temporary closures of the road to some or all vehicle types until the water recedes enough to be passable. In any event, an overnight visit to Fort Pickens calls upon you to experience the beauty—and the power—of nature, but it also means that at times there may be some risk of becoming temporarily stranded in the park, especially when a storm event or an unusual weather pattern takes us by surprise. Santa Rosa Island is a special place where we get to witness the dramatic interaction of weather, the sea, and land, though doing so may at times be inconvenient, especially when plans become disrupted.

For more information on current road conditions and our latest forecast concerning the risk of flooding, contact a ranger at a visitor contact station or phone the road conditions hotline at (850) 934-2656.

**Current Road Conditions & Flood Forecast Hotline: (850) 934-2656**

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.